

## Mongrel Empire Press Announces New Essay Collection by Hardy Jones

Norman, OK March 5, 2015— Mongrel Empire Press, an Eclectic Publishing House specializing in regional and uncommon literary works, is happy to announce the publication of *People of the Good God*, a collection of essays by Hardy Jones.

Hardy Jones is Cajun through his mother, and the Felice family is a blend of Native American, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Irish from the southwest Louisiana prairie. *People of the Good God* explores the search Hardy began in his twenties to understand Cajun identity and how the culture evolved into the new millennium. These essays are a combination of self-exploration, food writing, travel writing, and music writing that create a memoir that probes history, place, and culture.

Two-time Louisiana Poet Laureate Darrell Bourque praises *People of the Good God*, saying “What Hardy Jones gets just right in his story about his Cajun heritage is the *roux*, the base ingredient of a good gumbo. What emerges is the right flavor and the right mix of this French-African-Native-Caribbean-Creole dish that does as much as anything to define the culture he writes of. His story is my story and the story of the people of Eunice, and Marksville, and Pointe Noir, and Cut Off and every other remarkable enclave of Cajuns you might find in the 22 parish area in Louisiana that makes up contemporary Acadiana, the southern version of the Cadie/Acadie of the Mi-qmac and the French immigrants of 17<sup>th</sup> century Maritime Canada—everyday producing cooks and musicians and boat makers; spiritual guides and linguists and healers. And when we are lucky, teachers and storytellers like Hardy Jones.”

Guggenheim Fellow and Dos Passos Award winning author Randall Keenan declares, “If you wish to learn about the goodness, the complexity, the sweetness, the trueness, the grandness, of the Cajun people—the Acadians—then *People of the Good God* is a must read. Few authors get to the heart of the matter of any culture the way Hardy Jones does in these pages, with humor and probing intelligence, but also with a heart as big as Louisiana. His prose is as spicy and nourishing as a heaping helping of sauce picante, and as sly as the craftiest alligator.”

Novelist Rilla Askew notes that, “With an insider’s ear for dialect and an outsider’s eye for detail, Hardy Jones draws a compelling portrait of his people, the Cajuns of southwestern Louisiana. Likewise, former Texas Poet Laureate Larry D. Thomas says “In exacting and lucid prose combined with an extraordinary gift in capturing dialogue, Hardy Jones tells the story of how he not only learned to penetrate the heart of his Cajun cultural heritage but came to passionately embrace its indispensable significance to his core identity as a human being. In coming to terms with his own bloodline, Jones bestows his readers with the courage and insight to explore, accept, and appreciate their own.”

Hardy Jones is author of the novel *Every Bitter Thing* (Black Lawrence Press, 2010) and the memoir *People of the Good God* (Mongrel Empire Press, 2015). His fiction and creative nonfiction have been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes, and his creative nonfiction has been awarded

two grants. His short stories were anthologized in the 2009 *Dogzplot Flash Fiction Anthology*, *The Best of Clapboard House Literary Journal*, *Southern Gothic: New Tales of the South*, and *Summer Shorts II*. He is the co-founder and Executive Editor of the online journal *Cybersoleil* (cybersoleiljournal.com), and he is the Flash Fiction Editor for Sugar Mule (sugarmule.com). Dr. Jones teaches writing and serves as Director of Creative Writing at Cameron University. He splits his time between Lawton, Oklahoma and Si Sa Ket Province Thailand.

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### **About Mongrel Empire Press**

Mongrel Empire Press was established in 2007 with a mission to publish well-written, thoughtfully-considered works across generic and disciplinary boundaries. The Press actively identifies and promotes Oklahoma and regional writers while at the same time making room for outside the region works that, because of their mixed generic, disciplinary, and philosophical approaches, cannot find a home at other presses that have a more narrowly defined mission.

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